

Building a community of cancer survivors



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Today when we hear the word 'survivor', we think of someone who is not voted off the island but to someone who has been diagnosed with cancer, the word survivor means strength, hope and most important of all, life.

Changing demographics and better methods of cancer detection mean that one in three people will be diagnosed with cancer. However, improved treatment, earlier diagnosis and improved quality of care also means that many of these people will become cancer survivors.

We do a lot to prevent cancer and to improve the quality of care for those who are diagnosed with cancer to ensure the best possible outcomes. But, we haven't always focused as much on survivorship. With more and more cancer survivors, we need to turn our attention to and recognize the unique experiences of those living with, through and beyond cancer.

Lance Armstrong, five-time Tour de France winner, is one of the most well-known and visible cancer survivors. The Lance Armstrong

Foundation (LAF) defines survivorship as living with, through and beyond a cancer diagnosis. The definition extends to include family, loved-ones and caregivers, who are integral to the cancer experience. The LAF develops programs to support survivorship. In this province, through *Cancer Care Nova Scotia's* activities and the work of other advocacy and community-based volunteer groups such as the Canadian Cancer Society, the Canadian Prostate Network, Breast Cancer Action Nova Scotia and others, we are supporting individuals beyond their diagnosis through survivorship. We recognize that being cancer free does not equate with being free from the worry of cancer. Issues remain for those who survive.

After treatment ends, the next road in the cancer journey begins. Understanding the physical, emotional, and practical issues related to survivorship is something every cancer survivor needs to understand. The long-term effects of cancer treatment as well as the side effects, which may not apply to every survivor, still need to be understood. Because cancer is not just one disease but a

People who are affected by cancer come from all walks of life. These are just a few of the approximately 727,000 Nova Scotians who have felt the impact of cancer. They will be among those celebrating National Cancer Survivors Day on June 6, 2004.

L-R: Eileen Power, Terry Kelly, Rob Grimshaw, Rose Brooks and Lindsey Cousineau.



- student
- cancer advocate
- cancer survivor
- motivational speaker
- musician
- cancer survivor
- dad
- golfer
- cancer specialist
- great grandma
- volunteer
- cancer survivor
- student
- sparks leader
- cancer survivor

Building a community of cancer survivors (cont'd)

family of almost 200 diseases, it is complex in its diagnosis and its care. It is just as complex in its long-term effect and survivorship.

In Nova Scotia, today, 28,000 individuals are living with, living through or living beyond a cancer diagnosis. Approximately 14 per cent of these people were diagnosed 20 or more years ago. Sixty-two per cent of adults and 77 per cent of children who are diagnosed today will be alive in five years. These people will have significant issues that will need to be addressed.

Improving cancer survivor services and facilitating the ongoing development of services for patients, families and those who have been touched by the disease is a core function for *Cancer Care Nova Scotia*. However, our role to ensure hope and to recognize and celebrate the survivorship experience is most important of all.

National Cancer Survivors Day is marked each year on the first Sunday of June – this year on June 6, 2004. A Nova Scotia celebration will be held on June 6 between 2 and 4 p.m. at the World Trade and Convention Centre in

Halifax. Presented by *Cancer Care Nova Scotia*, the afternoon is one of music and remembrance. It is an opportunity for all who have been affected by cancer to come together to celebrate survivorship, as well as to remember those who lost their lives to cancer. We will also recognize the achievement of research, the caring of health professionals and the personal strength and support of individuals and, their families and friends. National Cancer Survivors Day is one way to build a community of cancer survivors.

In building this community, *CCNS* will work with cancer survivors to educate and raise awareness about the issues related to their ongoing survivorship and wellness. This will enable them to take an active role in ensuring the highest quality of life possible.

By attending the June 6th National Cancer Survivors Day celebration at the World Trade and Convention Centre in Halifax, you can be part of that community of survivors and remember and honour those who have lost their lives to cancer. Plan to attend and celebrate a world of hope and strength through community.

Watch the skies and be sun-wise

After a long, cold Nova Scotia winter many of us are anxious to enjoy the warm, sunny days that we hope lie ahead. However, it is important to be aware of and take steps to protect ourselves from the sun's powerful rays. Each spring the Canadian Dermatology Association (CDA) sponsors Sun Awareness Week to raise awareness about ultraviolet radiation and skin cancer prevention and to encourage the adoption of sun-safe practices. *Cancer Care Nova Scotia* and the Canadian Cancer Society – Nova Scotia Division, are partnering with the CDA to help share this message with Nova Scotians. This year Sun Awareness Week is scheduled from May 31 - June 6. The Nova Scotia slogan is "Watch the Skies and Be Sun-wise."

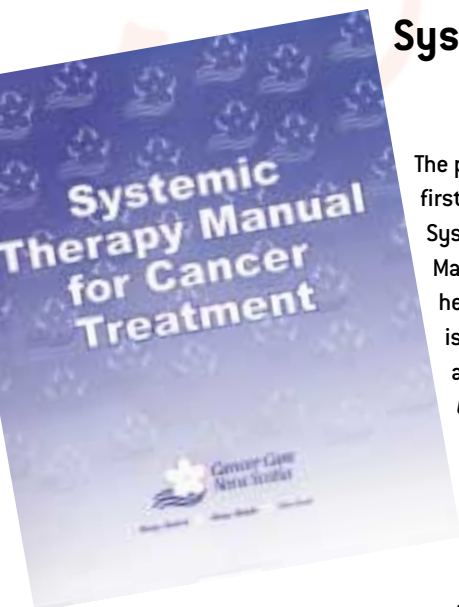
Nova Scotia has one of the highest rates of melanoma skin cancer in the country. Exposure to ultraviolet radiation is the most

important modifiable risk factor for skin cancer.

Protect yourself and your children by:

- Reducing sun exposure between 11am and 4pm when the sun's rays are at their strongest;
- Seeking shade or creating your own shade when you are outside;
- Wearing clothing to cover your arms and legs;
- Wearing a wide-brimmed hat to protect your face and neck;
- Using a broad spectrum sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) #15 or higher;
- Keeping babies under one year out of the direct sun;
- and
- Remembering that tanning parlours and sunlamps are not a safe way to tan. In fact, no tan is a safe tan. A tan is evidence of sun damage.





Systemic Therapy Manual for Cancer Treatment

The publication of the first edition of the Systemic Therapy Manual for cancer health professionals is a major milestone achievement for *Cancer Care Nova Scotia*, as information and ready access to comprehensive standards and regimens for systemic

professionals who treat patients with systemic therapy (chemotherapy, hormones and other drug therapies), or who care for patients who receive their chemotherapy elsewhere will be available for distribution by early June. The detailed manual will be published in a large binder. It will also be posted on the *Cancer Care Nova Scotia* website, www.cancercare.ns.ca. Plans are already underway to create a smaller pocket-sized version.

In standardizing the information available to health professionals in one reference source and tailoring the information to Nova Scotia practices, we are improving safety and effectiveness in the delivery of chemotherapy to cancer patients. The information will be updated as necessary to ensure it remains current.

Congratulations to Larry Broadfield, Manager of CCNS' Systemic Therapy Program, who developed the manual.

therapy delivery are key to ensuring a quality cancer system.

This thousand-page reference for health

Consistency needed in physical activity counseling

Physical activity counseling by healthcare professionals in Nova Scotia was the focus of a recent research study led by Drs. Laurene Rehman and Phil Campagna from the School of Health and Human Performance at Dalhousie University and Dr. Angie Thompson from the Department of Human Kinetics at St. Francis Xavier University.

"We surveyed healthcare practitioners in the province about the physical activity counseling they provided to healthy patients," said Dr. Campagna. "We asked them about the age of patients they regularly counseled, the recommendations they shared, opinions regarding the benefits of physical activity related to disease prevention, barriers to providing counseling and access to training and resources."

The findings indicated that although health professionals recognize the importance of an active lifestyle, only 38.4 per cent of their total physical activity counseling time was provided to healthy individuals.

The results also indicated that there were many variations in the amount and frequency of the physical activity recommended. "It was also surprising that almost 60 per cent of respondents did not recommend limiting television and/or computer time for their

patients," said Dr. Campagna, "even though it is widely known that a sedentary lifestyle puts people at increased risk for chronic illness."

Based on the literature review and survey results, it is evident that health care providers are supportive of providing physical activity counseling for their clients. However, a number of challenges were identified and need to be addressed. These include: a personal lack of information about physical activity and training, a lack of access to information resources and a lack of understanding about how the role of limiting sedentary activity can help to increase physical activity. Among the report's recommendations are to provide opportunities and training for health care providers to bridge the gap in their current knowledge and understanding. This will also help to ensure they are providing consistent messaging about how much physical activity is required at what frequency to ensure health benefit.

The physical activity action group of the Nova Scotia Alliance for Healthy Eating and Physical Activity is now working to address the recommendations.

Funding for this research was provided by *Cancer Care Nova Scotia* and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Nova Scotia.



RESEARCH





Volume V, Issue Two /
May 2004

This is a newsletter for and about the people and issues affected by Nova Scotia's cancer care system. It is produced by *Cancer Care Nova Scotia*.

We welcome and encourage everyone's input to this newsletter. Please submit your stories or story ideas to:
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If you want to be added to our mailing list, or if you want to regularly receive additional copies of this newsletter for your office or waiting room, please contact us at the above address with the number of newsletters you need.


The deadline for articles and story ideas for Volume V, Issue Three is June 10, 2004.


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News and Notes

 *Cancer Care Nova Scotia* is a sponsor of the provincial tobacco control conference on June 3rd and 4th in "smoke-free" Antigonish. Health professionals, health charity staff and volunteers, school staff, youth groups, concerned organizations and individuals are invited to attend. The goal of the conference is to increase community awareness and action to positively impact Nova Scotia's #1 preventable health risk - tobacco. For more information and to register go to www.smokefreens.ca or call 864-9633 or 1-866-777-7374.

 The American Association of Cancer Research (AACR) has a new information resource called Cancer Research Highlights. A special section at the front of each issue of the journal, *Cancer Research*, will contain brief summaries of five or six research studies. The summaries cover why the study was done, what was found and why it is important. These research highlights will also be posted twice a month on the AACR's website. To view the summaries, go to www.aacr.org and click on Research Highlights.

 Congratulations to Jill Petrella, *CCNS'* Quality Coordinator, and the Capital Health Triage Team for their work in streamlining the triage process at the Capital Health Cancer Centre. As a result, it takes less time to process a referral and notify the referring physician. This decreases the time of uncertainty for patients and improves communication between the cancer centre and the referring physician. Jill and her team recently received third prize at the Capital Health Quality Awards ceremony.

 *Cancer Answers* is a monthly column dedicated to answering commonly asked questions about cancer prevention and treatment. It appears in many newspapers across the province and is the result of a partnership between *Cancer Care Nova Scotia* and those newspapers.

If you have questions, related to cancer prevention and/or treatment, please email them to us at info@ccns.nshealth.ca. Following publication in the newspapers, *Cancer Answers* is posted on our website at www.cancercare.ns.ca. You will find the column under 'About Us' in the publications section.



Celebration of Life 2004 National Cancer Survivors Day

Mark June 6 on your calendar today.

Join us for a celebration of life and an amazing afternoon of family entertainment.
Pay tribute. Remember. Hope.

The entertainment lineup includes:
Terry Kelly, Kendra MacGillivray, Ken Tobias, Halifax Elementary Girls' Honour Choir,
Rhapsody Quintet and the Greene School of Irish Dance.

When: 2-4 p.m. June 6, 2004
Where: World Trade and Convention Centre, Argyle Street, Halifax

Free admission. Everyone Welcome.

For information call 1-866-599-2267.